

Cushing, the famous neurosurgeon and iatro-historian, and some of his Romanian colleagues

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Abstract. Both Osler and Cushing, his disciple, considered that mastering anatomy was essential to medical theory and practice. This was particularly true for a skilled surgeon, such as Harvey Cushing, but for the reputed internist William Osler as well. Dedicated humanists, devoted bibliophiles, and passionate iatro-historians, Osler and Cushing collected outstanding works, including those of Vesalius, and made up extremely valuable libraries meant to preserve original information and documents, able to convey traditions from the past to the new generations. Besides, they thoroughly discussed and interpreted the work and life of Vesalius, his importance as a trailblazer and significance for the history of medical knowledge. These two titans of modern medicine embodied the classic humanistic features of doctors and medicine, a science tightly connected with science, art, philosophy and religion, but equally with ethics and medical deontology. Not haphazardly, today, under various forms, medical “humanities”, art and history of medicine, are once again reconsidered and optionally included in the academic curriculum. Cushing knew and collaborated with several Romanian medical personalities, such as Nicolae Paulescu, Gheorghe Marinescu, Grigore T. Popa and particularly Dumitru and Florica Bagdasar. Following in his Master’s footsteps, Dumitru Bagdasar established in Bucharest, Romania, a valuable school of neurosurgery. At the same time, at different scales, Romanian scientists also nourished the same interest in culture and artistic emotions, as they did in their medical practice, research and teaching.

Keywords: Osler, Cushing, neurosurgery, medical humanities, Romanian doctors



Fig.1. Harvey Cushing

Osler, Cushing and medical humanities. William Osler (1849-1919) and Harvey W. Cushing (1869-1939) were two outstanding representatives of Western medicine at the crossroads of the 19th and 20th centuries, connected to each other by professional affinities as well as by a mentor to disciple

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relationship, since Cushing had been a resident in Baltimore (Fig.1). If Osler, “father of modern medicine”, due to his residency programme dimensioned the ancient Hippocratic tradition of medical bedside teaching in Canada, the United States of America (USA), and Great Britain, Cushing successfully pioneered modern neurosurgery in the USA, and all over the world, eventually. One of his foreign students was the young Romanian surgeon Dr. Dumitru [Dimitrie] Bagdasar (1893-1946), who graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of the Bucharest University in 1922 (Fig.2).



Fig. 2. Dumitru Bagdasar

Interestingly, among other things, Osler founded the History of Medicine Society, a section of the Royal Society of Medicine in London. Similarly, to his Master, Cushing became passionate about medical history, admired Osler and wrote a famous monograph on his personality – “The life of Sir William Osler” (two volumes), published in 1925, and rewarded by a Pulitzer Prize in 1926 (Fig.3). These true “heirs of Hippocrates”, Osler and Cushing, paid attention to and wrote “*on ancient medicine*”, as Hippocrates

did, collected rare and precious books, set up and donated to their Universities impressive libraries comprising significant documents, hence data concerning the universal history of the healing art, which they tried to improve, upgrade and creatively transmit to their followers. At the same time, they dealt with medical ethics and deontology topics. Osler, e.g, wrote on “*Aequanimitas*”(1904), whereas Cushing on “*Consecratio Medici*” (1926).

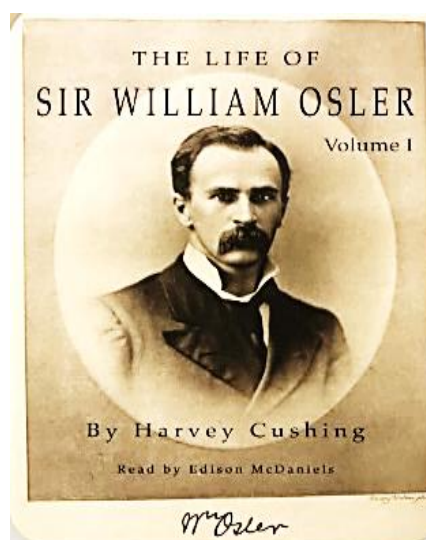


Fig. 3. H.W.Cushing. The life of Sir William Osler, 1925.

Osler and Cushing about Vesalius. Both of them greatly appreciated classic landmarks and personalities in medical history, one of which undoubtedly was Vesalius (1514-1564), the renowned founding father of modern anatomy due to his well-known works “*Tabulae Anatomicae Sex*” (Venice, 1538), six anatomical tables, some drawn by himself, some others by Jan van Calcar, and “*De Corporis Humani Fabrica Libri Septem*” (Basel, 1543) (Fig.4).

The same year, 1543, Vesalius abandoned his wonderfully decorated books with anatomical drawings and his dynamic anatomy teaching in Padua and other

surrounding cities, taking service with the *Holy Roman Emperor* Charles V and then with King Philip II of Spain. He became “an active practitioner, a distinguished surgeon, much consulted by his colleagues; there are references to many of his cases, the most important of which are to internal aneurysms, which he was one of the first to recognise”. Like Osler and Cushing much later, Vesalius was interested in neuroanatomy as an anatomist, a medical practitioner and a surgeon (Fig.5).



Fig.4.c. Vesalius. “Fabrica” Frontispiece (1543) (<https://commons.wikimedia.org>)

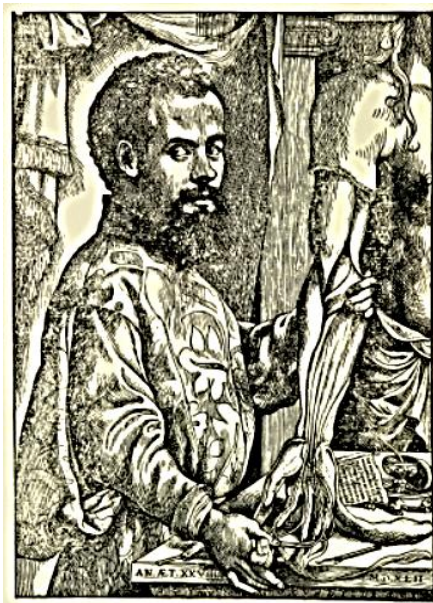


Fig.4.a. Vesalius' portrait (“Fabrica” 1543)

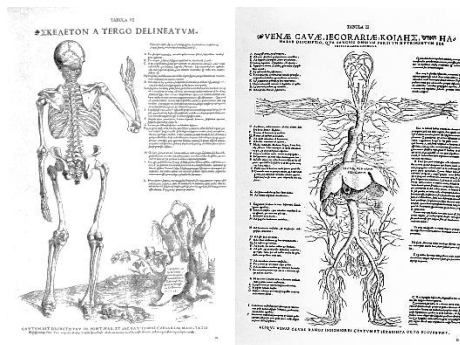
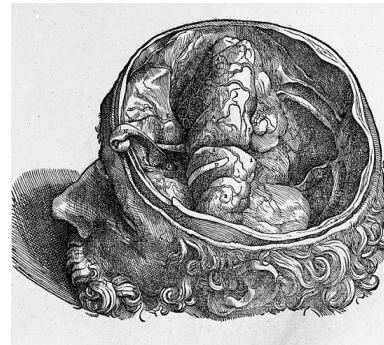
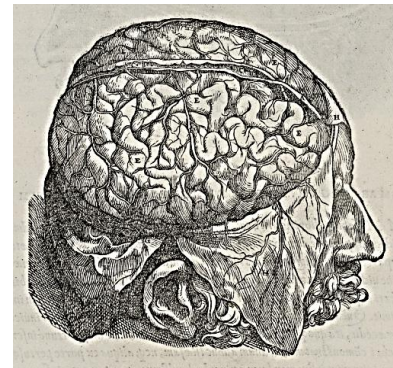


Fig.4.b. Vesalius. *Tabulae Anatomicae* (1538) (<https://commons.wikimedia.org>)

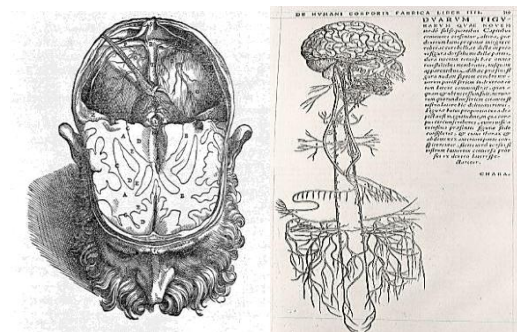


Fig.5. Vesalius. *Fabrica*. Drawings of brain dissections (<https://commons.wikimedia.org>)

“Tabulae Anatomicae” “are unique in anatomical illustration, and are of special value as illustrating the doctrine of the circulation that prevailed until Harvey's day”, Osler said (1). “De Corporis Humani Fabrica Libri Septem” (*On the Fabric of the Human Body in Seven Books*) was published while «Vesalius of Brussels» was professor at the school of medicine in Padua. The volumes were seemingly illustrated by his friend and fellow countryman, the same Flemish painter and designer of woodcuts, Jan Stevan *van Calcar* (c.1499-1545), trained in Tiziano Vercellio's painting school in Venice. Van Calcar's drawings were “very much in advance of anything previously seen, except those of Leonardo” – commented Osler (1). They also conveyed feelings, moods, ideas. Vesalius perfectly understood “that to know the human machine and its working, it is necessary first to know its parts – its fabric”. His creation was “the full flower of the Renaissance. As a book it is a sumptuous tome - a worthy setting of his jewel-paper, type and illustration to match.(..) the chef-d'œuvre of any medical library.” Osler outlined that initially Vesalius followed in Galen's footsteps: “Vesalius had no idea of a general circulation. Though he had escaped from the domination of the great Pergamite – (i.e. Galen of Pergamon) – in anatomy, he was still his follower in physiology” (1). Nevertheless in the second edition of his “Fabrica..” (1555), Vesalius significantly enlarged Galen's contribution and openly corrected the «Prince of Medicine»'s errors.

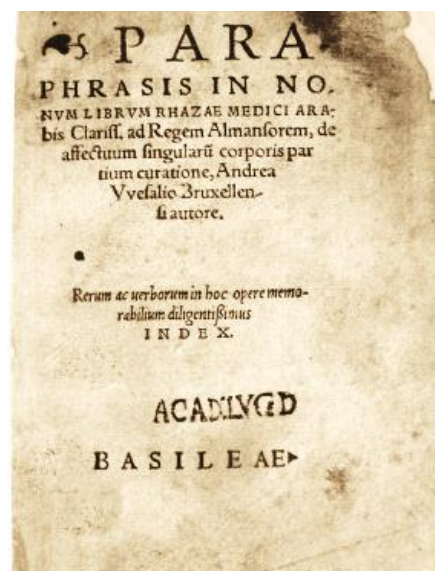


Fig.6. Vesalius. Paraphrasis of the ninth book of the Liber ad Almansorem by Rhazes (1537) (2)

Placed between bettered medical knowledge and art, between more accurate dissections on human corpses and animal cadavers, between Galenic data but also the Arabian tradition of Rhazes in “Almansor” (2), the anatomy of Vesalius “shook the medical world to its foundations”, this «Vesanus» [madman] infuriating both the academic world and the Church (Fig.6). In fact, “before the age of thirty, Vesalius had effected a revolution in anatomy” (1). His “China-root Epistle” (1546), even though focused on the appraisal of a herbal remedy, was mostly devoted to a defense of his anatomical methods and doctrines such as described in the *Fabrica* (1543), confessing to have burned some of his manuscripts as a sad reaction to the fierce opposition to his original discoveries and criticism of Galen's anatomy who mainly dissected animals and not human corpses. However, in parallel, Galen surely operated on living people, on wounded gladiators, improving surgical techniques and anatomical

understanding with excellent outcomes. Galen practised ligatures of vessels and treated injuries using his original oil with wine-soaked linen and damp sponges to keep the opening moist, since he thought that drying out of wounds had to be avoided. He sutured deep muscle layers and stripped tendons before stitching them together.

In turn, Cushing authored “A bibliography of Andreas Vesalius” published posthumously (1943), a writing crowning his entire iatrohistorical activity (3). Complementing Osler, he outlined other interrelated aspects connected with Vesalius’ books: “It was of course interesting to see what changes Vesal had made in the later text; and then there were other editions, posthumous ones, to be compared - and if possible possessed. Vesal had complained to the learned Johannis Oporinus, his printer, of various plagiarists of his earlier anatomical plates; these must therefore probably be of interest. And then the many other authors, his copyists and imitators, and the printing houses which issued their books, and what other medical books they printed, in turn lead you on, with a ring in your nose. You begin to feel that you would like to know something about Vesalius the man, and about his contemporaries, and about his life other than as an anatomist” (4). Biographically and bibliographically Cushing’s book exemplified a piece of “highly documented narrative medicine”: it was quite complete, with plenty of titles of Vesalius and about Vesalius, illustrations, frontispieces, anatomical figures and many other details. It was edited by Dr. John F. Fulton (1899-1960), a celebrated American neurophysiologist and historian of science, Cushing’s longterm friend and future biographer (Fig.7).

Cushing’s interest in Vesalius, the famous Flemish scientist proficient in Arabic, Greek

and Latin, started around 1900, when he acquired Moritz Roth’s “Biography of Vesalius”, edited in 1892, and it continued until his death in 1939. The impact of Vesalius was complex and almost turned into a daily life experience: a sort of “*imitatio Vesali*”. Interestingly, revising Galen’s Greek anatomy of the hypophysis, Vesalius named it in Latin “*glandula pituitaria*” to reflect Galen’s idea that it secreted nasal mucus (“*pituita*”), even though he disagreed with Galen. Vesalius thought it was more related to fluid excretion than to cognitive process. This very pituitary gland became the focus of Cushing’s research and the bridge connecting him with noticeable Romanian scientists of that time.

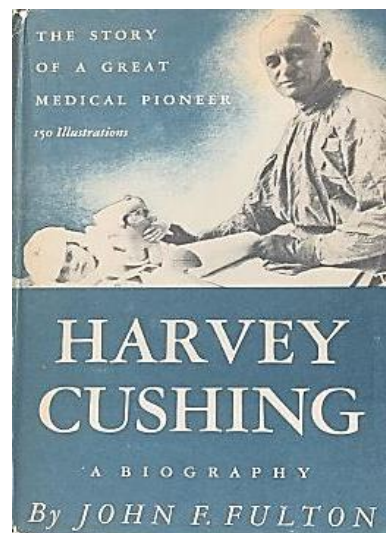


Fig.7. J.F.Fulton. Harvey Cushing. A Biography, 1947.

Science and ethical dilemmas. Concurrently it should be mentioned that, in the 16th century Italian Renaissance, the former moral principles were shattered by the necessity of medical progress, of transgressing limitations and ignorance. Anatomy needed corpses while these were lacking, dissection was restricted and vivisection prohibited. There were different ways aimed at body procurement for anatomical dissection but frequently these were unmoral, either

unethical or illegal. Even though shrouded in mystery, Vesalius' death itself would have been connected to his error of dissecting an only apparently dead «person». Knowledge evolved then under a very tense atmosphere, also because in that period both the Protestant Reformation and sciences confronted the Catholic Church. One of Vesalius' contemporaries and his Spanish fellow prosector in Paris was Miguel Servetus (1511-1553), a radical Reformation theologian and a physician, who correctly described the pulmonary circulation in his “*Christianismi Restitutio*” (*The Restoration of Christianity*) (1553), paving the way for Harvey's discovery (1628). Servetus associated his explanation of blood flow and respiration with his religious beliefs concerning the movement of the Holy Spirit through the body, heart and lungs, promoting an anti-Trinitarian view and seriously challenging Galenic physiology. They both experienced a tragic end of life because of their objective observations, which were infringing dogmatic principles by which the society existed in those times. Servet was persecuted by the Spanish and French Inquisitors, before being burned alive for heresy in Geneva due to proofs provided by John Calvin. As to Vesalius, his expiatory pilgrimage to Jerusalem occurred in the spring of 1564, when some of the last crusades still affected the very area where the unhappy genius anatomist travelled to and from the Holy Land. No wonder his terrestrial journey stopped for ever in Zante (Zakynthos), the island Odysseus once conquered. Nevertheless, the precise circumstances of Vesalius' death still remain unknown (5).

One can only understand the long way of human discoveries and the sacrifice they required, alas, on behalf of both doctors and patients for a more efficient “evidence-based

medicine” to be finally properly formulated and accepted in its own right.

The “Emancipators”. Vesalius, Osler and Cushing himself were certainly among the great “emancipators” – as Cushing put it – of medical thinking and practice. Because: “There are two ways of spreading light; to be / The candle or the mirror that reflects it./ I let my wick burn out - there yet remains / To spread an answering surface to the flame / That others kindle.” (Edith Wharton. *Vesalius in Zante*, 1902) (1). Vesalius himself attached to one illustration of his “*De humani corporis fabrica*” (plate 164) a quite Hamletian motto, attributed to Vergil, the ancient Roman poet: “*Vivitur ingenio, caetera mortis erunt*” - *Genius lives on, all else is mortal* (Fig.8).



Fig.8.a. Vesalius. *Fabrica*. *Vivitur ingenio caetera mortis erunt* (plate 164) (left)

Through their exceptional work, William Osler and Harvey Cushing keep pointing to Vesalius, to his brilliant career and painful destiny. Nowadays all three stand out as examples of professional excellence and attachment to cultural-educational

values, to medical history and art, sparking new debates on human body, mind and soul, on moral rules and intersubjective behaviour, on the present and future of medicine and mankind. This is also probably why currently the periodical of the International Society for the History of Medicine bears *Vesalius*' name and portrait (Fig.9). Undoubtedly, *Vivitur ingenio...*



Fig. 8.b. Vesalius. Fabrica. *Posterior view of skeleton* (left)

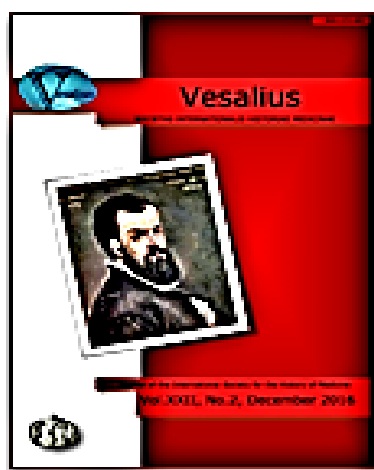


Fig.9. Vesalius. *Acta Internationalia Historiae Medicinae*. Periodical of the International Society for theHistory of Medicine

Cushing's connections with Romanian scholars. At the dawn of the 20th century complex relationships started between the Americas and Romania. If ongoing scientific progress in the USA and Canada began to integrate and creatively develop traditional European medicine, medical ethics and its classic Hippocratic standards were equally adopted and similarly promoted on various continents. Harvey Williams Cushing was a new man of the New World, a celebrated pioneering neurosurgeon, a master of thinking, but a dedicated medical humanist, too. With his celebrated writing *Consecratio Medici* (1926), he outlined that “there is only one thing that can effectively bind people, and that is a common devotion”, doctor's devotion included. Cushing knew several prominent Romanian physicians either personally or by their works and achievements. These scientists illustrated complementary fields of interest. Yet, they constantly believed that intellectuals, in general, and physicians, in particular, had to take a stand on social and educational problems, directly or indirectly connected to medicine and national emancipation, to bodily, mental and spiritual health. Among the Romanian medical emancipators were: Gheorghe Marinescu [Georges Marinesco], author of the first monograph on *The Nervous Cell* (1909), a worldwide reputed neurologist, an original contributor to this field, a complex researcher and a civic consciousness; Nicolae Paulescu, an experimental surgeon and physiologist, a skilled clinician, but a controversial thinker and epistemologist, deeply involved in the history of insulin, who besides signed a famous study on *The Hypophysis Cerebri* (1908) and invented an original hypophysectomy technique Cushing rapidly embraced; Gregor T. Popa, a Rockefeller scholar and excellent neuro-anatomist, discoverer -with Una Lucy

Fielding- of the hypophysial portal system (1930) and a writer, who also published numerous biomedical, social and academic essays in various journals, most of them collected in the volume *Life and Society* (1946) (6); the Dumitru and Florica Bagdasar family, Rockefeller scholars, trained in Cushing's Clinic: Dumitru Bagdasar founded modern Romanian neurosurgery, whereas later his wife broke new grounds in Romanian Pediatric Neuropsychiatry. Confronted with complex, delicate and challenging aspects of medicine, sometimes associated with the interwar and postwar ideologies and politics, most of these medical personalities went through personal dramas. However, as Cushing did, they endeavoured to identify either religious or lay moral principles, continuously choosing between rationalism and spirituality, scientific positivism and idealism-derived options. Ever since, history keeps on evaluating their sometimes coherent, sometimes contradictory profiles, under both professional and ethical criteria. Out of this eternal trial, good, bad or paradoxical behavioural patterns result, as valid life lessons able to further teach and model human characters facing similar obstacles.

Paulescu. As previously reminded, Dumitru Bagdasar, founder of the Romanian school of neurosurgery, was recommended to Cushing by a prominent Romanian physiologist and clinician, Professor Nicolae Paulescu (1869-1931). Paulescu, best known for his discovery of insulin, studied in Paris with Professors Albert Dastre, a specialist in physiological chemistry, follower of Claude Bernard, and Etienne Lancereaux, a respected internist and anatomic-pathologist. In 1908, Paulescu published an interesting monograph on the "Brain Hypophysis" (7), where he discussed the gland physiology, but also described an original method of hypophysectomy, namely a subtemporal or

transtemporal approach along with an innovative anaesthesia procedure (8,9). After repeated attempts in Paris, in 1898 and 1899, the experimental method he envisaged finally worked in 1903, thanks to the competent help of Professor Ion Bălăcescu (1870-1944) of Bucharest, previously a valuable Associate Professor of Surgery at the Iasi Faculty of Medicine and "St. Spyridon" Hospital, too (10). Adapted and applied to human patients by Cushing, this procedure proved to be advantageous for the successful ablation of pituitary tumours. Cushing adopted it for a time. He considered that "Paulescu was the first to appreciate the possibilities offered by this operation when coupled with a certain principle of modern cerebral explorations-that of dislocation." Besides Cushing emphasised the vital role of the hypophysis Paulescu already noticed: "Our experimental observations, largely confirmatory of those of Paulescu, have shown that the procedure must be limited solely to a partial removal of the anterior lobe with careful avoidance of total removal, which leads to a condition of cachexia hypophyseopriva" (11). But in 1910, Cushing performed the first transphenoidal hypophysectomy, using the sublabial approach, which he developed and popularised (12). Without having ever met Paulescu physically, Cushing highly appreciated his scientific activity, he was perfectly acquainted with. It was due to a letter of recommendation from Paulescu that Cushing openly welcomed Dr. Dumitru Bagdasar and his wife, Dr. Florica Bagdasar, in his Clinic in Boston. Then Bagdasar obtained a Rockefeller scholarship which rendered easier his stay in the United States from 1926 to 1929. The same was soon true for his wife, initially a neurosurgeon herself, then a pioneering pediatric psychiatrist. Through Bagdasar, Cushing offered Paulescu his photo (Fig.10.a,b). Back to Romania, Dumitru Bagdasar continued to keep in touch with

Cushing and his team, he had worked with for two years, asking for advice and opinions. Education for health and equally education for art, both were discussed in their letters (13). In August 1929, a Congress of Physiology had to take place in the USA and Cushing hoped to meet Paulescu, whom he enabled and officially invited to participate in this event. Concurrently he asked Dr. Bagdasar to convince him to come (13). Unfortunately, in the end, health reasons prevented Paulescu from undertaking such a long journey, while Pavlov, the Physiology Nobel Prize (1904) he was supposed to encounter, attended the event. Paulescu himself was a religious person, a writer, a moralist and a philosopher of science, especially of biology and medicine, dedicated to his patients, to his profession and research.

Indirectly, Cushing also influenced the Romanian Prof. Alexandru Moruzi's neurosurgical techniques, since Moruzi, who, in 1933, preceded Bagdasar with a Neurosurgery Clinic at the Faculty of Medicine of Iasi, got trained in Paris, in Prof. Thierry de Martel's Clinic, another famed disciple of the great Cushing.



Fig.10.a. Autograph photo: "Professor Paulescu. Have the regards of Harvey Cushing"



Fig.10.b.Nicolae C. Paulescu

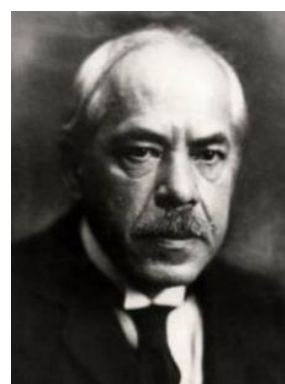


Fig.11.GheorgheMarinescu

Marinescu. But preceding Paulescu, the same hypophysis, so attractive to Cushing, was much focused upon by Professor Gheorghe Marinescu (1863-1938), founder of Romanian neurology, one of Jean-Martin Charcot's most distinguished pupils. Already in 1891, with Pierre Marie, Marinescu (Fig.11) thoroughly described acromegaly (14), whereas with the Romanian physicist Dragomir Hurmuzescu, who was studying then in France, Marinescu performed the first medical radiological examinations of the hands in acromegaly, at the beginning of 1896, immediately after the discovery of the X rays by Wilhelm Röntgen in November 1895. Afterwards they investigated the skull changes too, obviously including the *sella turcica* alterations. Marie et Marinescu noticed only morphological pituitary alterations, since at that time the specific role the hypophysis was not

completely understood. By experimentally destroying it in the cat, Marinescu revealed the pituitary was essential for the living beings to survive (15). These were, indeed, some of the first steps in deciphering the secrets of neuroendocrinology. Useless to say that Professor Gheorghe Marinescu corresponded with Harvey Cushing and, as in the case of Paulescu, they frequently exchanged scientific papers and ideas (16). In his turn, Dr. Bagdasar closely cooperated with Professor Marinescu, operating neurological pathologies from his Clinic, whenever required. Cushing praised Dumitru Bagdasar to Marinescu, as a modest, diligent and promising student. **Popa**. Another direct contact had Cushing with Professor Grigore T. Popa (1892-1948), a prominent neuro-anatomist, who brilliantly illustrated both the Universities of Iasi and Bucharest (Fig.12).

Gr. T. Popa benefitted from the same generous Rockefeller scholarships and got trained in the USA and England. At the University College in London, with the eminent neuro-histologist Una Lucy Fielding, he identified and defined the portal hypothalamo-pituitary circulation (17,18). This vascular link represented an important component for better understanding the morphological and functional connection between the central nervous system and “the conductor of the endocrine orchestra”, *i.e., the pituitary gland*. *Professor Cushing was vividly interested in this significant detail and invited Popa for a demonstration of this portal vascular system that crossed the pituitary stalk and which, among other things, opened new perspectives to the concept of neuroendocrinology. After graduating from the Faculty of Medicine in Iasi, Popa had been a research fellow and demonstrator of Anatomy at Chicago in 1926, London, in 1930-1932 and Cambridge, in 1935-1936, where in 1940, he gave a lecture on his hypothetic “Cerebrostimuline”*

(19). In the aftermath of their discovery, Popa and Fielding continued to investigate the hypophysis, surmising and experimentally analysing its secretory role (20). In his diary, Bagdasar outlined, for instance, a very interesting lecture Gr.T. Popa, still working in Iasi, gave in Bucharest at Colţea Hospital, on November 13th, 1934, invited by the Medical Interns' Association. *In 1935, in Chişinău, on behalf of the Romanian Society of Neurology, Psychiatry, Psychology and Endocrinology (SNPPE), based in Iasi, Popa had to deliver a report on the “Current Knowledge about the Pituitary Gland and its Research Directions”, published in the SNPPE journal (21). On the other hand, while working at Cambridge with Geoffrey Wingfield Harris, Popa set up a method for an easier approach of the hypothalamo-hypophyseal region of the laboratory animals: “After attempting to section the pituitary stalk by both these operations, the conclusion was drawn that a method giving a better exposure of the hypothalamo-hypophyseal region was required, leading to the investigation of the temporal route, which is described below” (22). These facts were appreciated by Harvey Cushing himself who was particularly interested in the anatomy and surgery of the pituitary gland (23, 24). Gregor T. Popa appreciated Dumitru Bagdasar he got to know better after leaving Iasi for Bucharest, where, in 1942, Popa was transferred as Anatomy and Embryology Professor, being then also elected dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Romania's capital. **Parhon**. In this context, Professor Constantin I. Parhon (1874-1969) should also be reminded, due to his essential contribution to the study of the endocrine glands, including the hypophysis. An excellent student of Professor Gheorghe Marinescu, Parhon collaborated with his Master, but also with Gr. T. Popa and D. Bagdasar. Professor of Neurology and Mental Diseases at the Iasi Faculty of*

Medicine for 20 years, he founded there the SNPPE in September 1918 and in 1919 its periodical was already edited. In 1933 he moved to Bucharest where a pioneering chair of Endocrinology was created for him. In fact Parhon is considered a father of modern endocrinology, along with Nicola Pende, Gregorio Marañon and Léopold Lévi. In 1909, with Moise Goldstein he published the first synthesis on the endocrine glands: “Les Sécrétions internes” [*The Internal Secretion*] (Paris: A. Maloine Editeur).



Fig.13.a.Dr. Fulton and Dr. Bagdasar during the IXth ISHM Congress in Bucharest, 1932.

Bagdasar. Dr. Dumitru Bagdasar had a difficult destiny, even though a brilliant mind. He was mobilised during the Great War and suffered from exanthematic typhus. After graduating, he left for Cushing's Clinic, but before finishing his training he fell ill with tuberculosis. His wife shared the same suffering. In 1935, at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest a conference of neurosurgery was created for Dr. Bagdasar, he held for ten years, organising the nucleus of the future

Neurosurgery Clinic, which today bears his name too¹. As a progressive and committed scientist, during World War II, in April 1944, Bagdasar signed, together with other remarkable Romanian intellectuals, the memorandum for the country's exit from the war against the Allies and he continued to plead for peace and social justice. In June 1945, the dean Gr.T. Popa transformed Bagdasar's conference in a full professorship. But, in the meantime, Dumitru Bagdasar had become Minister of Health and considered that it was not fair for him to accept the new position under the new circumstances.



Fig.13.b. Dr. Fulton's caricature made during the IXth ISHM Congress in Bucharest, 1932.

However, the reputed members of the Recommendation Commission, Constantin I. Parhon, professor of Endocrinology, Constantin I. Urechia, professor of Psychiatry and Nicolae Ionescu-Sisești, professor of Neurology, in the name of the Professors Council, rejected Bagdasar's apparently justified objections, supporting the necessity for neurosurgery education at the University of Bucharest and for higher neurosurgery assistance (13). Unfortunately, only a year later, in July 1946, Professor Bagdasar died from an incurable disease. His wife, Dr. Florica Bagdasar, a dedicated specialist and,

¹ It also bears the name of Prof. D. Bagdasar's successor, Prof. Constantin Arseni: “Bagdasar-Arseni” Clinical Emergency Hospital.

since 1949, associate professor of paediatric neuropsychiatry, replaced him as Minister of Health (1946-1951), becoming the first woman minister in Romanian history. Dumitru and Florica Bagdasar had a daughter, Alexandra (1935-2025), an outstanding mathematician with original contributions, emigrated to the USA in 1957. After graduating from the University of Bucharest, she defended her doctoral thesis at the Yale University. Her second marriage was to Saul Bellow (1975-1985), Literature Nobel Prize winner in 1976. He visited Bucharest in 1978, accompanying Alexandra who assisted her dying mother and participated in the funeral. He reflected the critical situation of Bucharest few years before the dramatic fall of the communist regime, in December 1989 in his novel (!) "The Dean's December" (1982).

Bagdasar and the IXth Congress of the International Society for the History of medicine (ISHM). From Prof. Bagdasar's diary, one realises he surely enjoyed attending various artistic events and public lectures, more or less connected with medical practice. Two of them, for instance were given by Prof. Alfred Rainer, head of the Anatomy Chair, first at the Faculty of Medicine of the Iasi University, then in Bucharest. One presentation the Bagdasar liked, took place at the Dalles Hall, and dealt with the sculpture of a young lady body by Adolf von Hildebrand, a German specialist in ancient and Renaissance art. Another conference by Rainer they attended at the Athenaeum in Bucharest in 1934, focused on "Today's biology and Plato". In September 1932, when the IXth ISHM Congress was held in Bucharest organised under the presidency of the notable Romanian surgeon and medical historian, Victor Gomoiu, and the high the patronage of King Carol II, Harvey Williams Cushing, the fascinating

iatro-historian, together with John Farquhar Fulton were among the honour guests. Cushing could not come to Bucharest on that occasion, but Fulton (New Haven) could. He addressed his homage to the King, as delegate of the Yale University (Connecticut) and of that district of America, adding: .."by my *presence at this congress* I fulfil an old wish of mine - *that of seeing Romania which I know only from hearing or reading. What I saw, was certainly not a surprise, but it greatly surpassed my expectations, and I leave Romania not only with the most pleasant impression, but also with regret of not being able to stay more in this country. I thank Your Majesty for the distinction² with which You honoured me, and remain grateful for the friendly reception which the Rumanian colleagues, under the leadership of this extraordinary man which is Dr. Gomoiu, have offered me*" (25). On September 14th, Fulton chaired a scientific session, summing up the debates on the topics tackled by the participants. It was a success.

Cushing was equally mentioned, when Fulton recalled that it was Cruveilhier who first stated that in cases of gastric ulcers, one should look for a lesion at the base of the skull. "This question, Fulton commented, was taken up and confirmed by H.W. Cushing." In the years to come Fulton's medical historical activity was more and more impressive. Throughout his stay in Romania, Fulton was accompanied by Dumitru Bagdasar, he already knew from the USA, from Cushing himself, and from various other meetings (Fig.14, 15). In the ISHM Congress from 1932 Gheorghe Marinescu and Constatin Parhon participated as well.

Hippocratically speaking, once again: "Life is short and Art long; the occasion fleeting;

² Cultural Merit Order 1st Class.

experience fallacious, and judgment difficult.” Brain, mind, intelligence and soul, human nature as a whole is rediscovered and put in new perspectives. A historical approach, a “spiritual harvest”, could possibly help find more beneficial ways for the species and, implicitly, ecosystems to exist. However, in the long run, history should recreate or regenerate universal brotherhood values.

According to Cushing, “there is only one thing that can effectively bind people and that is a common devotion.(...).. of people engaged in a common purpose”, such as *Consecratio medici* should be.



Fig.14. From left to right: I.T. Niculescu³, J. F. Fulton, D. Bagdasar at a Congress in France.

“Man's Redemption of Man”. To put it in Cu-shing's terms, the historical perspective always achieves a certain “realignments in greater medicine” and a “man's redemption of man”. The immortals in the history of sciences are some of the foremost creative contributors of all time to the welfare of mankind. On the foundation laid by such

scientist's new conceptions, methods and devices of biology and medicine emerged. Man's place and identity in nature has been constantly redefined, redimensioned.

The 21st century is certainly entraining a gnoseological, biological, anthropological and moral revolution

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Collaborator of Gheorghe Marinescu and Dumitru Bagdasar.

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